



Association of Teachers and Lecturers (ATL Cymru's) response to the Welsh Assembly Government's Welsh-medium education strategy

The Association of Teachers and Lecturers represents over 160,000 education professionals across the four constituent parts of the United Kingdom. It draws its membership from teachers and lecturers, leaders and support staff in maintained and independent schools, and Further Education Colleges. As well as campaigning vigorously to protect and enhance members' pay and conditions ATL also believes that the education profession has a key role in developing education strategy and policy. ATL Cymru represents over 6,500 education professionals in colleges and schools across the whole of Wales.

As a keen supporter of the Welsh language, ATL Cymru welcomes the publication of this strategy and the WAG should be congratulated on its comprehensive strategic approach to the development of Welsh-medium education. However, the future is fraught with difficulty. If the aims remain merely aspirational, it is doubtful whether there will be much actual progress. If on the other hand they are to become statutory requirements, there could well be a significant backlash, given the climate of underfunding across the board. If in reality or appearance funds are diverted from English-medium education in order to promote these objectives, this is likely to be highly divisive and counter-productive.

The strategic aims are fine as aspirations, but take no account of the reality on the ground. Given that funding is presently constrained and, in the wake of the economic downturn, likely to become more so it is difficult to see what practical progress can be made.

The workforce planning objectives contained in strategic aim 4 are particularly pertinent and have the possibility of being developed in the future. The objectives will be very difficult to realise however: Language skills are acquired over years, way beyond the scope of deliverable CPD - even intensive courses (where available) will only scratch the surface.

ATL would like clarification on how the figures for the targets have been arrived at. There is clearly scope for increasing uptake of Welsh medium provision in

largely English speaking areas but it is less clear whether progress could be enough to raise figures nationally on the scale envisioned.

Contact:

Dr Philip Dixon
Director, ATL Cymru
Tel: 02920 465 000
Email: cymru@atl.org.uk